

DESIGN PROFESSIONAL'S SIGNATURE AND SEAL (STAMP) ON CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS

IR A-19

Reference: Title 24, Part 1, Sections 4-316, 4-317, and 4-318
Business and Professions Code Sections 5536.1 and 6735

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Discipline: ALL

This Interpretation of Regulations (IR) is intended for use by the Division of the State Architect (DSA) staff, and as a resource for design professionals, to promote more uniform statewide criteria for plan review and construction inspection of projects within the jurisdiction of DSA, which include State of California public elementary and secondary schools (grades K-12), community colleges, and state-owned or state-leased essential services buildings. This IR indicates an acceptable method for achieving compliance with applicable codes and regulations, although other methods proposed by design professionals may be considered by DSA.

This IR is reviewed on a regular basis and is subject to revision at any time. Please check the DSA web site for currently effective IR's. Only IR's listed in the document at <http://www.dsa.dgs.ca.gov/Pubs/default.htm> (click on "DSA Interpretation of Regulations Manual") at the time of plan submittal to DSA are considered applicable.

Purpose: The purpose of this Interpretation of Regulations (IR) is to clarify when signatures and seals/stamps are required and where they shall be shown on construction documents for projects under DSA jurisdiction.

Background: Title 24, Part 1, requires the architect or engineer in responsible charge of a project to assume responsibility for the safety of design of the project. "The stamp and signature of the architect or engineer on a plan, specification, or other document shall be deemed evidence that full responsibility is assumed by the signatory for work shown..." (*Title 24, Part 1, Section 4-316 (e)*).

Policy: The architect or the engineer in general responsible charge, and other professionals delegated for preparation of portions of the project must be licensed or registered by the state of California, and shall provide his/her signature, stamp and registration number on plans, specification, calculations and other documents in accordance with Business and Professions Code and Title 24, Part 1.

For plans and specifications, seals (stamps) and signatures may be applied manually or electronically and may be in original or reproduced form.

For documents submitted electronically for approval through DSA's electronic plan review program, Architects and Engineers must apply digital signatures with Public Key Cryptography to the final construction documents (record set, see Section 2). Refer to DSA Procedure [PR 08-01](#) for more information.

1. Plan Check Documents: The licensed architect or the registered engineer in general responsible charge shall provide his/her stamp, and a notation as to the intent of the document, such as "For Plan Check Only". (*Business and Professions Code, Sections 5536.1 and 6735*)

1.1 Structural Calculations and Reports: Signature, seal or stamp, date of signing and sealing, license number and expiration date shall be shown on the cover sheet of the calculations and reports at the time of submittal.

2. Construction Documents: In accordance with Business and Professions Code, Sections 5536.1 and 6735, the architect or the engineer in general responsible charge, and other professionals delegated for preparation of portions of the project (*Title 24, Part 1, Section 4-317 (g)*), shall provide, on their respective plans and specifications that are "permitted or to be released" for construction (i.e., record set), the following:

- 2.1 Plans:** Signature, seal or stamp, date of signing and sealing, license number and expiration date shall be shown on each drawing sheet. Signature must be provided before plans are approved by DSA.
- 2.2 Specifications:** Signature, seal or stamp, date of signing and sealing, license number and expiration date shall be shown on the cover sheet or signature sheet as the minimum. Signature must be provided before the specifications are approved by DSA.
- 2.3 Documents by Others:** When using construction documents prepared by other professionals, the architect or structural engineer in general responsible charge, in lieu of over stamping, may provide a statement of general conformance in accordance with [IR A-18](#). Also see Section 3 below.

3. Deferred Approvals: A California licensed architect or registered engineer stamps and signs the plans and specifications for the deferred approval item. The architect or the engineer in general responsible charge of the design of the project shall submit the plans and specifications for the deferred approval item, with the notation indicating that the deferred approval documents have been found to be in general conformance with the design of the building (*Title 24, Part 1, Section 4-317 (g)*). See DSA IR A-18 for more details on the Statement of General Conformance.

The Statement of General Conformance "shall not be construed as relieving the architect (in general responsible control) or structural engineer in general responsible charge of his or her rights, duties, and responsibilities under Sections 17302 and 81138 of the Education Code and Sections 4-336, 4-341 and 4-344" of Title 24, Part 1." (*Title 24, Part 1, Section 4-317 (b)*)

3.1 Overstamping: If the architect or structural engineer in general responsible charge had exercised responsible charge (per Business and Professions Code, Section 6703) in the preparation of the deferred approval documents, he or she may overstamp and sign those documents.

4. Pre-Check (PC) Documents: The requirements of Section 2 above shall apply. See also Section 6.1 of DSA Procedure [PR 07-01](#), *Pre-Check (PC) Approval Procedure*, for additional requirements. For changes to an approved PC document, see Section 2 of IR A-18, and Sections 7 and 8 of this IR.

5. Site or Landscape Work: The architect or structural engineer in general responsible charge of a project may delegate the portions of the site work or landscape work containing access compliance and fire life safety features. Documents for these portions of a project may be prepared, stamped and signed by a competent (see Title 16, Division 5, Section 6731) civil engineer or landscape architect, as permitted by the Business and Professions Code Sections 6731 and 5615, respectively.

5.1 Civil Engineers: If the entire project consists of only site work and/or non-school buildings (Title 24, Part 1, Section 4-314), a California registered civil engineer may assume general responsible charge for the project.

5.2 Landscape Architect: If the entire project consists of only landscape work and/or non-school buildings, a California registered landscape architect may assume general responsible charge for the project.

6. Assumption of Responsibility for Incomplete Documents: If construction documents, deferred approval documents, PC documents, etc. bear the signature and stamp of an architect or engineer who has left the project, deceased, or whose license or registration has been revoked, cancelled, or retired before his/her design or construction

was completed, another licensed architect or registered engineer shall assume responsibility for the project or the portion of the project for which the original architect or engineer was delegated responsibility, in accordance with Title 24, Part 1, Sections 4-316(c) and (d).

7. Re-Stamping/Re-Signing of Completed Documents:

7.1 When Re-Stamping/Re-signing not required: Once a set of documents is properly stamped and signed by an architect or engineer whose license or registration was current at the time of signing, it is considered valid. Re-stamping and re-signing of valid documents are not required except as listed in Section 7.2 below. DSA shall have the final decision on whether re-stamping/re-signing is required or not.

- **Death of the Architect or Engineer:** If an architect or engineer dies, any valid documents that were signed while he/she was alive and his/her license was current at the time of signing should be considered valid after death unless there is cause.
- **Expired, Suspended, or Revoked Licenses:** similar to Section 7.1 above.

7.2 When Re-Stamping/Re-signing Is Required: Re-stamping and re-signing of valid documents are generally not required unless there are probable causes. Some of the probable causes for re-stamping and re-signing are, but not limited to, the following:

- The architect or engineer of record exercises his/her right to assume responsibility in accordance with Section 7 of this IR.
- The stamps and signatures were improperly or fraudulently placed on the documents.
- The documents have become expired or void.

7.3 Changes to Valid Documents: See IR A-18, Section 2.